

# Reading Toolkit: Grade 8 Objective 3.A.7.a

## Standard 3.0 Comprehension of Literary Text

### Topic A. Comprehension of Literary Text

#### Indicator 7. Analyze and evaluate the author's purposeful use of language

Objective a. Analyze and evaluate how specific language choices contribute to meaning and create style

Assessment Limits:

Significant words and phrases with a specific effect on meaning

Significant words and phrases with a specific effect on meaning

Denotations of above-grade-level words used in context

Denotations of above-grade-level words used in context

Connotations of grade-appropriate words and phrases in context

Connotations of grade-appropriate words and phrases in context

Patterns of words and phrases that create a specific style, such as humorous, serious, mysterious, etc.

Patterns of words and phrases that create a specific style, such as humorous, serious, mysterious, etc.

Contributions of dialect to character and plot

Contributions of dialect to character and plot

Idioms and colloquialisms

Idioms and colloquialisms

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## Advanced/Gifted and Talented Reading Grade 8 Objective 3.A.7.a

### Other Objectives Addressed

- b. Analyze and evaluate language choices that create tone
- c. Analyze the appropriateness of a particular tone
- d. Analyze and evaluate figurative language that contributes to meaning and/or creates style
- e. Analyze imagery that contributes to meaning and/or creates style
- f. Analyze elements of style and their contribution to meaning

### Instructional Task

Students will analyze the author's use of purposeful language in order to assume the role of writers applying for editorial positions with a school literary magazine or other literary magazine such as *The New Yorker*. Before being hired, an applicant must demonstrate the ability to analyze and evaluate the author's use of purposeful language in text. Students will take on the roles of both the interviewers and applicants (authentic product).

### Development of Task

1. Students will read texts of appropriate complexity from multiple genres and themes in order to analyze the author's ability to incorporate purposeful language. Examples are the poem *A Time to Tell* by Robert Frost; the novels *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens and *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor; and the short story *Harrison Bergeron* by Kurt Vonnegut.
2. " Students will analyze and evaluate the author's use of purposeful language in the text as preparation for the literary magazine job interview. Students will answer the following "Interview Questions:"

#### Interview Questions

- At this magazine, it is very important for our staff to understand how language is used to create meaning and style (Objective a). Please discuss the style of a literary text of your choice. Explain how the author has used specific language choices to create a specific style, including the denotations and connotations of words and the use of dialect, idioms, or colloquialisms to create style. Explain which language choices were most effective in creating the style (analysis).
- At this magazine, it is very important for our staff to understand how language choices create tone and the appropriateness of that tone (Objective b, c). Please discuss the tone of a literary text of your choice. Explain the words and phrases that are used to create the tone and the appropriateness of the tone for the meaning and style of the text. Explain which language choices were most effective in creating the tone.
- At this magazine, it is very important for our staff to understand how an author uses figurative language, images, and symbols to create meaning (Objectives d, e). Please give examples of figurative language from a literary

text of your choice and explain how each example contributes to the style, tone, or meaning. Explain which language choices were most effective in contributing to meaning.

- At this magazine, it is very important for our staff to understand how the elements of style contribute to meaning (Objective f). Please give examples of elements of style, such as repetition, hyperbole, understatement, or rhetorical questions from a text of your choice. Explain the connections between the element of style and the text's meaning tone, or style. Explain which elements of style were most effective in contributing to meaning.

3. The teacher will organize students in pairs for the interviews, assigning the role of the "Editor-in-Chief" to one student and "job applicant" to the other (auditory learning style). The Editor-in-Chief will ask the applicant the interview questions, and based on the thoroughness and accuracy of the applicant's answers, will assess the applicant's ability to perform the job functions (evaluation). The students will then switch roles, and the Editor-in-Chief will become the applicant to be interviewed.

## Lesson Seeds

### Reading Grade 8 Objective 3.A.7.a

#### Activities

Students should read a literary text (Suggestion: Amelia Bedelia) where multiple meanings of words create idioms. Prior to reading, the teacher will point out these idioms to students. After reading is complete, teacher and students will discuss how Amelia Bedelia's misunderstanding of phrases created comedy. Students should be able to detail what the character actually did and what she was told to do.

Prior to reading a literary text which contains dialect, students should work in small groups to translate samples of dialect into Standard English. (Example: "I reckon them taters will be right for pickin'. I guess the potatoes are ripe.") As students read the text, they should record any examples of dialect that enable them to understand the character or the plot. After reading is complete, students and teacher should discuss the effect of the story speculating about the contribution of the dialect to authenticity.

Students will read a literary text where the teacher has selected words that have multiple meanings. After students have read the text, they will focus on the selected words. The teacher will show students multiple sentences using a selected word. Then they should choose the sentence where the word is used in the same way as the text. Students will justify their chosen meaning using text support. Finally they will determine how knowledge of that word helps a reader understand the text.

Prior to students reading a literary text, the teacher will ascertain that students know that style is how authors use language. Three particular elements students should be aware of as they read is the author's word choice, the author's sentence structure and length of sentences, and how or if the author uses figurative language, repetition, dialogue, and/or imagery. After students have read a portion of the text, they and the teacher will review that portion noting any of the elements listed above. Next, students should draw a conclusion about that author's style. Following that, they should read another portion of text to determine if their conclusion about author's style is correct.

## Clarification

### Reading Grade 8 Indicator 3.A.7

To show proficiency of the skills stated in this indicator, a reader will be able to identify, describe, analyze, and evaluate an **author's use of language**, specific words or phrases that contribute to the meaning of a text, or to the creation of an author's style. Author's style is the way an author uses language to express his/her thoughts. This may include word choice, figurative language, and literary devices. These words and phrases are purposeful and appeal to the emotions, the intellect, and the senses. When used with other text elements, they assist readers in constructing meaning of an entire text.

**To identify and explain how dialogue contributes to a narrative**, a reader should know that one way character is revealed is by what a character says and what other characters say about him/her. Those words an author selects for a character to say or have said about him/her are part of the development of that character. Since characters move the plot of a narrative or are moved by the plot, the growth of that character through dialogue also directly affects the movement of the plot.

**To identify, explain, and analyze the role of specific words and phrases that contribute to meaning and create style** in a literary text, a reader should be aware of the different types of specific words and word groupings in texts or portions of texts that establish tone, develop character, and create style. A reader can use these specific words and phrases to construct meaning from a text by clarifying their purpose and examining their implications.

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| • Significant Words    | words that are necessary to a reader's understanding of a text   |
| • Denotation           | literal, dictionary meaning of a word  |
| • Connotation          | idea or feeling associated with a word in addition to its literal meaning  |
| • Multiple Meanings    | words that have acquired additional meanings over a period of time   |
| • Idiom                | phrase whose meaning cannot be understood from the literal meaning of the words in it<br>Hold your tongue is an English idiom meaning keep quiet.  |
| • Colloquialism        | familiar, informal everyday talk Movies is an informal term for the more formal term cinema.   |
| • Dialect              | a form of language spoken in a particular place by a particular group of people  |
| • Word/Phrase Patterns | patterns of words and phrases involving how something is said that supersedes what is said. These word patterns or phrases joined with word choice create style such as humorous, serious, mysterious etc... |

**To identify, explain, analyze, and evaluate words and phrases that create tone** in a literary text, a reader must first know that tone expresses an author's attitude toward his or her subject.

"Listen to me!" yelled Cory. "I thought of something, but I need your help." Elisa wiped the tears from her face. "I'm going to lie down on the ice and try to crawl to Minnie. You lie down behind me and hold my ankles. Don't let go, no matter what, and don't stand up. Understand?" Elisa nodded sniffing.

from "The River" by Yetti Frenkel

The underlined words help a reader determine the urgent tone of this text.

Many readers use the words tone and mood interchangeably. However, mood refers to the atmosphere of a text.

Outside Eric's bedroom window the January blizzard raged. Treetops swayed dangerously as gusting winds sculpted snow into huge drifts.

from "Sierra Oscar Sierra" by Lynn Murray

The underlined words help a reader determine the perilous mood of this text.

The language, punctuation, and details a writer chooses help create the tone which could be serious, playful, angry, sad, etc...In addition to specific word choices the inclusion of specific punctuation helps relay an author's attitude. A reader identifies words or phrases in a text that, in conjunction with the content of the text, signal the author's attitude. For example, in a comic text about a mistaken identity, an author may point out a ludicrous appearance or behaviors of a character to create a light-hearted tone. Once those words have been identified, a reader can tell why those words create a specific tone. Ultimately a reader can examine how an author chooses specific words to create a specific tone. A critical reader evaluates the language choices, the intent of the author, and the purpose of the text to determine the quality of tone.

**To identify, explain, analyze, and evaluate figurative language** in a literary text, a reader must first know different types of figurative language in texts or portions of texts. In simpler texts figurative language can clarify or intensify descriptions. In more complex texts figurative language can create style, establish symbolism, and allow critical readers to view people, settings, and ideas in new ways. A close reading of a complex text involving attention to figurative language and its effect on meaning helps a reader to understand a text from the literal to the critical.

- Simile  
stated comparison of two things that have some quality in common using the words like or as
- Metaphor  
stated comparison of two things that have some quality in common not using the words like or as
- Personification  
stating that an inanimate object has lifelike characteristics
- Onomatopoeia  
words whose sound suggest their meaning

**To identify, explain, and analyze sensory language** that contributes to meaning in a literary text, readers must identify those words and phrases in a text that appeal to the senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch. Next, readers must explain how sensory language evokes those particular senses and makes a story or description become real. From this a critical reader can discern how sensory language assists a reader in having a clear picture of characters and settings which, in turn, allows a reader to understand a text fully. In more

complex texts sensory language is a component of style. For example, language that evokes the senses could be how an author relays his/her story or theme. The use of symbolism, irony, and allusion in a literary text adds layers of meaning to a text.

- Symbolism

using a person, place, object, or action that stands for something other than itself

- Irony

the contrast between what is expected will be said or done and what actually is said or done

- Allusion

a reference to a famous person, place, event, or work of literature

Symbolism, verbal and situational irony, and literary allusion can be composed with sensory language. An author's choice of language creates tone, and those language choices could include symbolism, irony, and allusion. A critical reader notes the use of sensory language, determines its use in a narrative, and is able to judge its effect on the meaning of a literary text.

To identify, explain, and analyze elements of style and their contribution to the meaning of a literary text, a reader must understand the elements that create style. Since style is the way an author expresses him/herself, use of these elements creates a unique means of expression.

• Repetition	technique where a sound, word, or phrase is repeated for effect
• Hyperbole	statement where truth is exaggerated for effect
• Alliteration	repetition of consonant sound at the beginning of a word
• Understatement	technique where what is said is intentionally less than what is complete or true
• Rhetorical Question	question asked for effect where no answer is expected

A critical reader notes the types of stylistic elements an author employs and determines a purpose for their use. Through stylistic elements, a reader's attention is drawn to certain statements or ideas which assist in constructing meaning of a literary text.

## Sample Item #1 Brief Constructed Response (BCR) Item with Annotated Student Responses

### Question

Read the story 'Deliverance' and answer the following question.

Explain the mood the author creates in paragraph 7. In your response, use words and details from the paragraph that show how the author creates this mood. Write your answer on your answer document.

### Annotated Student Responses

The author creates a very thrilling and suspenseful mood in paragraph 7. He does this by separating his sentences. This gives time for the reader to grip what is going on and get interested. Also the author creates this mood by using thrilling and suspenseful words shuddering, and popping. Lastly the author makes the mood in paragraph 7, thrilling and suspenseful by having a cliff hanger at the end, literally.

Annotation: The reader describes the mood as "a very thrilling and suspenseful" one and offers that the author creates suspense "by separating his sentences." In addition the author uses "suspenceful words shuddering and popping" and composes a literal "cliff hanger at the end." All of these ideas are valid and do create a suspenseful mood but could be better explained with examples. "Separating his sentences" could be clarified in a variety of ways. The use of dashes, commas used for effect, and a series of short, choppy sentences create suspense. The diction, shuddering and popping, that connote sound and action add to the tension. The literal "cliff hanger" is the climber anticipating falling from the wall.



The mood the author creates in paragraph 7 is frustration and desperation. The narrator was frustrated because she couldn't rise any higher on the rock wall, she/he said the wall was giving me nothing. These feelings of the narrator is how the author made the mood frustrating because these feelings of no solution and weakness makes the reader feel frustrated. The author makes the mood desperate because the narrator thinks if she doesn't find a way to get over she'll "peel off the wall". The author makes the feelings of the narrator desperate by making him/her wanting a solution to save their life. This makes the reader desperate that the reader finds a solution.

Annotation: The reader identifies the mood as "frustration and desperation" and indicates the mood of frustration is an outgrowth of the feelings of the narrator who cannot "rise any higher on the rock wall" and feels "the wall was giving me nothing." The "feelings of no solution and weakness" experienced by the narrator make the reader feel the same way. The "desperate" mood emerges as the narrator tries to get over the rock wall and feels he'll "peel off the wall." The reader explains that the narrator's frustration and desperation extends to the reader, causing the reader to connect with the feelings of the narrator.

Paragraph 7 instills fear into the mind of the reader. Several phrases depict this mood. To begin with, the narrator says "I concentrated all my strength to the fingers of my left hand, but they were leaving me. This makes the reader feel hopelessness and fear for the narrator.

Also, the narrator says "I was on the perpendicular part of the cliff, unless I could get over it soon, I would just peel off the wall, thinking about falling thousands of feet definitely makes the reader fearful,

Annotation: The reader responds that "fear into the mind of the reader" is the mood. The reader uses text "all my strength to the fingers of my left hand, but they were leaving me" and "unless I could get over it soon, I would just peel off the wall" to support feelings of fear. The reader connects the narrator's fear with the idea of fear built in a reader's mind, "thinking about falling thousands of feet defiantly makes the reader fearful."

## Handouts

## Deliverance

by James Dickey  
(Based on his novel)

I GOT TO THE BULGE AND THEN WENT UP OVER IT and planted my left foot solidly on it and found a good hold on what felt like a root with my right hand. I looked down.

<sup>2</sup>The top of the overhang was pale now, ten or twelve feet below. I turned and forgot about it, pulling upward, kneeling and toeing into the cliff, kicking steps into the shaly rock wherever I could, trying to position both hands and one foot before moving to a new position. Some of the time I could do this and each time my confidence increased. Often I could only get one handhold, but it was a strong one, and I scrambled and shifted around it until I could get a toe into the rock and pull up.

The problem-interest of it absorbed me at first, but I began to notice that the solutions were getting harder and harder: the cliff was starting to shudder in my face and against my chest. I became aware of the sound of my breath, whistling and humming crazily into the stone: the cliff was steepening, and I was laboring backbreakingly for every inch. My arms were tiring and my calves were not so much trembling as jumping. I knew now that not looking down or back — the famous advice to people climbing things — was going to enter into it. Panic was getting near me. Not as near as it might have been, but near. I concentrated everything I had to become ultrasensitive to the cliff, feeling it more gently than before, though I was shaking badly. I kept inching up. With each shift to a newer and higher position I felt more and more tenderness toward the wall.

<sup>4</sup>Despite everything, I looked down. The river had spread flat and filled with moonlight. It took up the whole of space under me, bearing in the center of itself a long coiling image of light, a chill, bending flame. I must have been seventy-five or a hundred feet above it, hanging poised over some kind of inescapable glory, a bright pit.

<sup>5</sup>I turned back into the cliff and leaned my mouth against it, feeling all the way out through my nerves and muscles exactly how I had possession of the wall at four random points in a way that held the whole thing together.

<sup>6</sup>It was about this time that I thought of going back down, working along the bank and looking for an easier way up, and I let one foot down behind me into the void. There was nothing. I stood with the foot groping for a hold in the air, then pulled it back to the place on the cliff where it had been. It burrowed in like an animal, and I started up again.

<sup>7</sup>I caught something — part of the rock — with my left hand and started to pull. I could not rise. I let go with my right hand and grabbed the wrist of the left, my left-hand fingers shuddering and popping with weight. I got one toe into the cliff, but that was all I could do. I looked up and held on. The wall was giving me nothing. It no longer sent back any pressure against me. Something I had come to rely on had been taken away, and that was it. I was hanging, but just barely. I concentrated all my strength into the fingers of my left hand, but they were leaving me. I was on the perpendicular part of the cliff, and unless I could get over it soon, I would just peel off the wall.

## Rubric - Brief Constructed Response (BCR)

### Score 3

The response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text.

- Addresses the demands of the question
- Effectively uses text-relevant<sup>1</sup> information to clarify or extend understanding

### Score 2

The response demonstrates a general understanding of the text.

- Partially addresses the demands of the question
- Uses text-relevant<sup>1</sup> information to show understanding

### Score 1

The response demonstrates a minimal understanding of the text.

- Minimally addresses the demands of the question
- Uses minimal information to show some understanding of the text in relation to the question

### Score 0

The response is completely incorrect, irrelevant to the question, or missing.<sup>2</sup>

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Text-relevant: This information may or may not be an exact copy (quote) of the text but is clearly related to the text and often shows an analysis and/or interpretation of important ideas. Students may incorporate information to show connections to relevant prior experience as appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> An exact copy (quote) or paraphrase of the question that provides no new relevant information will receive a score of "0".

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